

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

January 14, 2009

Ms. Cindy Smith
Administrator
USDA Animal Plant Health Inspection Service
1400 Independence Avenue SW
Whitten Federal Bldg., Room 312-E
Washington, DC 20250

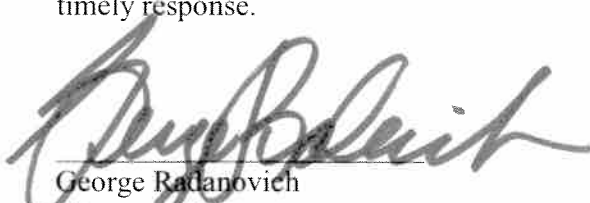
Dear Administrator Smith:

We are writing in regard to the U.S. Department of Agriculture Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) proposed rule covering the importation of grapes from Chile under a systems approach (Federal Register Docket No. APHIS-2007-0152). Concerns over this issue have been brought to our attention by a number of our constituents in the California table grape industry. We are respectfully requesting that APHIS thoroughly address the issues raised by the California stakeholders in their comments on the proposed rule prior to the publication of any final rule on this matter.


We are concerned about the potential for increased risk of pest and disease introduction into California as a result of the proposed rule. More specifically, the table grape industry has questions about whether APHIS completed a comprehensive pest risk assessment on Chilean grapes as part of this process, and about a potential new pest, the Grape Berry Moth, that was not specifically addressed in the Federal Register notice. Our constituents have also requested additional details from the pilot study on this matter. Again, we ask that the requests be addressed prior to the publication of a final rule.

Finally, we encourage you to work with the affected domestic industries in the development of regulatory changes. Thank you for your consideration of this request and we look forward to your timely response.

Sincerely,



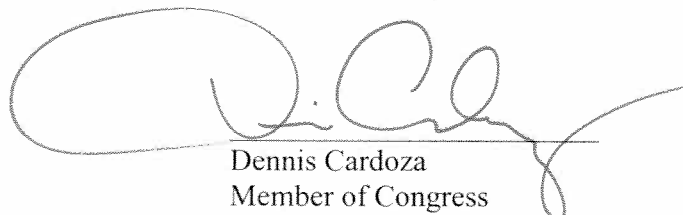
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